

School: Humanities
Course: Creating the Customer Experience & Why a WRP Mindset is Important & Different
Faculty: Becky Curtis, CEO, Take Courage Coaching

Summary

The course "Creating the Customer Experience & Why a WRP Mindset is Important & Different" by Becky Curtis, moderated by Dawn Hays and Melissa Steger, focuses on transforming the way injured workers are treated within the workers' compensation system. Becky Curtis, the founder of Take Courage Coaching, shares her personal journey and professional insights to illustrate the importance of a Workers' Recovery Professional (WRP) mindset.

Becky begins by recounting her traumatic car accident that left her with a spinal cord injury and subsequent chronic pain. Her story highlights the physical and emotional challenges she faced and the pivotal role that effective support systems played in her recovery. She underscores the significant difference between sympathy and empathy, emphasizing that injured workers need empathetic support that encourages them to become self-managers rather than passive patients.

Becky's journey led her to develop Take Courage Coaching, a telephonic coaching program designed to help people with chronic pain. The program provides tools and support for self-management, aiming to improve clients' quality of life by fostering behavioral changes and reducing dependence on medications. Through this program, Becky discovered the critical "missing link" in many people's recovery—the ongoing support necessary for making real behavioral changes.

One of the key takeaways from the session is the importance of building trust between injured workers and their support team, which includes adjusters, case managers, and medical professionals. Becky shares her initial distrust of the workers' compensation system and how it transformed into a trusting relationship with her nurse case manager, leading to better care and more effective support. This trust, built through patience and understanding, was crucial for her recovery.

Becky emphasizes the need for adjusters and case managers to shift their focus from simply managing claims to genuinely supporting injured workers. This includes avoiding questions that center on pain levels, which can inadvertently reinforce the pain experience, and instead asking about positive aspects and progress. Such solution-focused communication can significantly enhance the recovery experience by fostering a more positive mindset.

The concept of motivational interviewing is introduced as a powerful tool for dealing with resistance and anger in injured workers. Developed for working with people with addictions, motivational interviewing involves reflective listening and eliciting from the individual what they need and want. This approach can help lower defenses and create a more cooperative environment, making it easier to support the injured worker effectively.

Becky also highlights the importance of purpose and meaning in recovery. She shares that no one asked her about returning to work for three years post-accident, which left her without a clear path forward. Once she was encouraged to consider her future, she found a new purpose in helping others with chronic pain. This aspect of recovery is vital, as it provides injured workers with a goal and a sense of contribution, which can significantly enhance their overall well-being.

In conclusion, the course advocates for a paradigm shift in how injured workers are treated within the workers' compensation system. By adopting a WRP mindset, professionals can provide more empathetic, trust-building, and solution-focused support, ultimately leading to better outcomes for injured workers. Becky's personal and professional experiences serve as a compelling testament to the power of this approach.

Learning Objectives

1. Understanding the WRP Mindset: Learn what differentiates the Workers' Recovery Professional (WRP) mindset from traditional work comp professionals.
2. Empathy vs. Sympathy: Understand the difference between empathy and sympathy and how to apply empathy effectively in client interactions.
3. Pain Education: Gain knowledge about the experience of pain, how it is processed in the brain, and techniques for managing chronic pain.
4. Building Trust: Learn strategies for building trust and effective communication with injured workers.
5. Motivational Interviewing: Acquire skills in motivational interviewing to better support clients in making positive behavioral changes.

Primary Takeaways

1. Role of Support Systems: The importance of having a strong support system and how it contributes to the recovery and well-being of injured workers.
2. Importance of Trust: Building trust between adjusters, case managers, and injured workers is crucial for successful outcomes.
3. Effective Communication: Using solution-focused communication rather than problem-focused approaches to better assist clients.

4. Purpose and Meaning: Encouraging injured workers to find purpose and meaning in their lives post-injury to enhance their recovery and quality of life.
5. Chronic Pain Management: Understanding that managing chronic pain often requires education, behavioral changes, and continuous support rather than just medical treatments.

Course Outline

- 1) Introduction to the Customer Experience
 - a) Overview of the Course
 - b) Introduction of Presenters and Their Backgrounds
 - c) Objectives of the Session
- 2) The WRP Mindset
 - a) Definition and Importance
 - i) How WRP Differs from Traditional Approaches
 - ii) Benefits of Adopting a WRP Mindset
 - b) Case Study: Becky Curtis's Story
 - i) Personal Journey of Recovery
 - ii) Development of Take Courage Coaching
- 3) Empathy vs. Sympathy
 - a) Understanding the Difference
 - i) Definitions and Examples
 - ii) Impact on Client Relationships
 - b) Practical Application
 - i) Techniques for Demonstrating Empathy
 - ii) Avoiding Pitfalls of Sympathy
- 4) Pain Education and Management
 - a) The Brain and Pain
 - i) How Pain is Processed
 - ii) The Role of Central Nerve Pain
 - b) Functional Restoration Programs
 - i) Components and Benefits
 - ii) Personal Experiences and Outcomes
- 5) Building Trust and Effective Communication
 - a) Strategies for Building Trust
 - i) Importance of Trust in Recovery
 - ii) Techniques for Building Trust

- b) Solution-Focused Communication
 - i) Shifting from Problem-Focused to Solution-Focused
 - ii) Practical Examples and Scenarios

- 6) Motivational Interviewing
 - a) Principles of Motivational Interviewing
 - i) Definition and Purpose
 - ii) Key Techniques
 - b) Application in Work Comp
 - i) Benefits for Injured Workers
 - ii) Case Examples

- 7) Conclusion
 - a) Recap of Key Points
 - b) Final Thoughts from Presenters
 - c) Q&A Session

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